AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-5 cancelled.

6. (New) A method of fabricating a semiconductor optical waveguide including a step of growing a tapered epitaxial layer upon a supporting surface in a single epitaxial growth step by chemical beam epitaxy, the plane of the taper being substantially perpendicular to the supporting surface, wherein the tapered epitaxial layer is grown using a mechanical shadow mask comprising a silicon wafer having etched apertures and an oxide film coating upon which deposition does not occur at temperatures used for growth by chemical beam epitaxy.

7. (New) A method according to claim 6 wherein the tapered epitaxial layer is grown in the same growth step as an untapered epitaxial layer.